August, 1997 India would complete 50 years of its Independence. This is a major milestone for us. Freedom did not come to us easily. We struggled hard for achieving it under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and many other leaders. It would, therefore, be appropriate that we commemorate in a befitting manner the spirit of our Independence by recalling the aspirations during the freedom struggle and the achievements during the last 50 years.

Addressing the Constituent Assembly, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India declared:

> "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the whole world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."

Now that we are completing 50 years of our freedom, it would also be time for introspection to see how close we have come to the redemption of that pledge.

In keeping with the thinking that this would be a major event in our national life, the Government of India has decided to organise year-long celebrations starting from 15 August, 1997. The Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been designated as the nodal agency for these commemorative celebrations.

With a view to establish in advance a structure which would plan, implement and monitor suitable activities during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, a National Committee under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister and an implementation Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development have been set up. The members of the National Committee will come from various walks of life and their names will be notified shortly. A Cabinet Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Home Affairs is also being constituted.

The National Committee has been mandated to provide general policy directions and guidelines for the formulation of suitable programmes. The Cabinet Committee would be empowered to take all decisions on behalf of the Government with regard to all matters connected with an efficient and successful organisation of the celebrations. The functions of the Implementation Committee would *inter alia* include—

(a) evolving events and programmes geared towards commemoration of this momentous event; and

(b) Implementing such events and programmes.

There is need to rekindle the sprit of freedom struggle in the country and make our younger generations know about the epic story of freedom struggle. The emphasis in the programmes will be to reach out and involve as many people as is possible rather than confining the events to Delhi or State capitals. The functions would also highlight the manner in which the various democratic institutions in our social, economic and political life have evolved and continued during the last 50 years.

Since all these activities will have a very wide gamut and involve Government machinery as well as people at all levels, it would be important to constitute State and Union Territory level committees under the Chairmanship of the respective Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors. These committees will evolve State-level programmes on the one hand and oversee the implementation of the National and State-level programmes on the other. The Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors of the States and the Union Territories, respectively, have been requested to constitute such Committees.

I am sure that the help of all the Hon'ble Members of this august House shall be forthcoming in our endeavour to celebrate this momentous event in the life of our Nation.

12.09 hrs

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Fifth Report

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That this House do agree with the Fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 6th September, 1996."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

> "That this House do agree with the Fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 6th September, 1996".

The motion was adopted.